

16 July 2019

Mrs Jane Gorecka  
Headteacher  
St Martin's CofE Controlled Primary School  
Ranmore Road  
Dorking  
Surrey  
RH4 1HW

Dear Mrs Gorecka

### **Short inspection of St Martin's CofE Controlled Primary School, Dorking**

Following my visit to the school on 2 July 2019, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in May 2015.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. The school's motto, 'Being the best you can be', summarises the ambitious culture of the school. Leaders, governors, staff, pupils and parents all value this shared aim. You and your staff put pupils at the heart of everything you do and this has created the warm, inclusive ethos. Parents are exceptionally positive about the school and speak highly of you and all your staff. 'I have only praise for this school, the staff are amazing and cannot do enough to support my children' and 'I am overwhelmed by the amazing staff and the skills they have in nurturing all children' are just a couple of the many positive comments expressed by parents.

You, ably supported by senior leaders and governors, know the school well. You have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. You have a clear plan in place for the school's further development. Governors are knowledgeable. They review and evaluate information from a range of sources, including pupils' performance information, external reports and first-hand information to hold leaders to account. They have regular training to strengthen their skills, enabling them to offer leaders high-calibre support and challenge. As a result, the school continues to improve.

Pupils are proud of their kind and caring school. They show positive attitudes and learning behaviours. They work hard, are resilient in the face of difficulties and enjoy being challenged to do their best. They believe they can do anything if they try and know that teachers will help them to improve. All pupils who responded to Ofsted's

pupil survey said they enjoy school. The majority would recommend the school to a friend moving to the area.

At the previous inspection, leaders were asked to improve the quality of teachers' questioning. You have implemented a schedule to check the quality of teaching. You are able to demonstrate how teachers have progressed as a result of training and development. Observations in lessons show that teachers use questioning effectively to encourage pupils to explain their thinking in greater detail. This enables teachers to identify pupils' misconceptions and provide further challenge for the most able. The previous inspection also asked leaders to improve the early years foundation stage so that children were fully engaged in their learning. The leadership of the early years has strengthened and staff have high expectations. More effective use of assessment ensures that children make good progress. Over the past three years, the proportions of children attaining a good level of development have been well above the national average.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. The school has a strong culture of safeguarding. Staff and governors take their responsibilities very seriously and keep up to date with regular training on the most recent guidance. They have a clear understanding of what to do if they are worried about a pupil. Leaders follow up on staff's concerns swiftly and work well with outside agencies. Child protection records are detailed and well organised. Leaders ensure that all appropriate recruitment and background checks have been completed on staff, governors, volunteers and regular visitors to the school, making sure they are suitable people to work with pupils.

Pupils say they feel safe in school and know that staff will look after them. They say there is no bullying in school. When they fall out, adults will help them if they cannot solve the issues themselves. They have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. Pupils understand the dangers of using the internet and know how to keep themselves safe when online.

### **Inspection findings**

- At the start of the inspection, we agreed that the first line of enquiry would consider how well teaching ensures that pupils are able to achieve well in mathematics. In 2018, the proportion of key stage 2 pupils attaining the higher standard in the national tests was above the national average. However, over time, the progress of key stage 2 pupils in mathematics has been below the national average.
- There is a strong emphasis on improving the teaching of mathematics across the school. The mathematics leader has received training and support, and is coaching staff to develop a new teaching approach for mathematics. As a result, teachers have higher expectations of what pupils can achieve, reflecting the more demanding mathematics curriculum. Teachers focus well on developing pupils' basic number skills and mathematical vocabulary. They are also encouraging

pupils to think and reason mathematically when solving problems. Looking at pupils' books with leaders, it is clear that pupils are being challenged and their work is of a high standard. However, these approaches are not yet fully established.

- My second line of enquiry focused on the effectiveness of support for disadvantaged pupils. The school has a relatively small proportion of disadvantaged pupils. Leaders know individual pupils well and are fully aware of the barriers to learning that each pupil faces. The mantra of leaders, provide high-quality teaching to raise achievement, underpins your planning for this group. Their books show that teachers give them helpful feedback and provide additional support when necessary.
- Leaders review the progress and needs of disadvantaged pupils to develop and tailor support. Additional interventions are provided to meet specific needs. For example, a specialised writing programme is in place to develop pupils' independent writing skills. Leaders use effective systems to monitor the progress pupils make in these sessions. Consequently, pupils make strong progress from their starting points.
- Leaders set aspirational targets to diminish the differences in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and others. However, some disadvantaged pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are not catching up. Staff have specialised plans in place to help these pupils progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Consequently, they are making progress towards their targets.
- My final line of enquiry focused on how the curriculum prepares pupils for life in modern Britain. The curriculum is broad and well balanced. Subject leaders know their subjects well and provide many opportunities for pupils to learn about other cultures. Pupils benefit from developing links with schools overseas. In addition, pupils' learning is enriched through a variety of school trips, attending special events and listening to visitors.
- Pupils are knowledgeable about different cultures and religions, and use this understanding to make comparisons with their own Christian beliefs. During a topic on India, pupils learned about a range of India's technological developments. These enabled pupils to appreciate Indian contributions to global society. Pupils' learning about Hinduism, enriched by a visit from a practising Hindu, helped pupils to respect and value difference, and know the importance of treating all people equally. The development of pupils' spiritual understanding is a strength of the school. As a result, pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the focus on mathematics is strengthened further so that larger proportions of pupils attain the expected and higher standards.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education for the Diocese of Guildford, the regional schools commissioner and the director of

children's services for Surrey. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Tracey Bowen  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

This inspection took place on transition day. Year 6 pupils were visiting their new schools and all other pupils were meeting their new teachers in preparation for September. Pupils who will be admitted into key stage 2 and the early years were also visiting. We agreed an appropriate timetable and inspection activities in light of this.

During the inspection, we visited a selection of classes in each year group, including the early years. I met with you and senior leaders to discuss various aspects of the school's work. I discussed a range of matters related to safeguarding, including the recruitment and vetting procedures for staff. I evaluated evidence to show how you work with other agencies to keep pupils safe. Alongside leaders, I scrutinised a sample of pupils' books. I spoke with pupils informally during lessons and held a discussion with a group of pupils. I had a telephone call with the school's improvement partner. In addition, eight members of the governing body met with me, including the chair of the governing body.

I reviewed the school's website and a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation document, school improvement plan and external reports on the school's work. I spoke with parents on the playground. I considered 126 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 41 free-text comments. I also took account of 28 responses to Ofsted's staff survey and 113 responses to the pupil survey.